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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1040
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5758
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3439
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1525
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1512
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2534
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4140
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5258
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2879
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3359
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1360
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3187
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002309

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP
NSC FOR E.PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SULTAN STRUGGLES TO MAKE MARK ON PRESIDENTIAL
CAMPAIGN TRAIL

REF: A. JAKARTA 1995

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 1881

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The DCM met with the Sultan of Yogyakarta on December 18. The Sultan--who recently declared that he was running for president--noted that he was not yet campaigning at full steam. Despite press reports that he might be receptive to the idea, he would not confirm whether he might choose to run as a vice-presidential candidate. He reviewed some of his key policy prescriptions, including a focus on anti-poverty efforts.

2, (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): The Sultan continues to lag in the polls and his vague, languorous manner does not suggest a strong campaigner. That said, he remains respected in Java and could potentially be a player in next year's elections.
END SUMMARY.

MEETING THE SULTAN

[1](#)3. (C) The DCM met with Sultan Hamengkubuwono X of Yogyakarta on December 18. The Sultan was in Jakarta to give a speech at the Foreign Correspondents Club. A recently declared candidate for president in 2009, the Sultan said he was not yet campaigning at full steam. His campaign would steadily ramp up ahead of the presidential vote, which takes place in July 2009. He added that his public appearances at this time are more for "image building," i.e., as a way to let people outside of Yogyakarta get to know him.

[1](#)4. (C) When asked, he would not confirm various press reports that have him positioned as a vice presidential candidate perhaps for former president Megawati of the Indonesian Party of Democratic Struggle (PDIP). He was also vague when asked about how he planned to get on the presidential ballot. (Note: In order to be nominated under Indonesia's complex rules, potential candidates need to pass

certain thresholds in terms of party and voter support based on the April 2009 national legislative elections. The thresholds are quite tough to reach and effectively limit the number of presidential candidates to maybe three or so.)

POLICY VIEWS

¶5. (C) The DCM asked the Sultan to give a brief sketch of his policy views. The Sultan replied that his first priority was economic, especially poverty alleviation. He said he wants to create "a social net" for Indonesians who are unemployed or underemployed. Given the international economic context, this was of increasing concern. In his area, Yogyakarta, production in the furniture industry had already fallen by thirty percent.

¶6. (C) The Sultan--sort of vaguely--added that "the key to prosperity" for Indonesia was to abandon its "continental" strategy and concentrate on "a maritime strategy." He elaborated at lunch later that "a maritime strategy" would focus on the navy rather than the army and attempt to capitalize on marine resources and trade conducted in and near Indonesia's waters.

¶7. (C) The Sultan also underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in governance, tolerance toward all ethnicities, and an emphasis on Panca Sila (Indonesia's nationalist/secular doctrine). In a decidedly liberal secularist vein, he derided the government's attempts to curb pornography via recent legislation, referring to the bill that passed as "an invasion of privacy."

A DARK HORSE

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¶8. (C) The Sultan is a popular governor of the Yogyakarta region and is well-known in parts of Java Island, the most populous region in Indonesian. That said, his campaign so far has been underwhelming and he continues to lag in the polls behind such heavyweights as President Yudhoyono and former president Megawati. His vague, languorous manner does not suggest that he will be a barnburner on the stump either. He cannot be fully counted out, however, because he has few enemies and is respected as a person. He could easily wind up as a popular choice for vice president.

HUME